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Next Week:

* Insight into
exciting products
revealed at
Computer Expo '92.

* A look at
Jordanian computer
magazines.

The biggest computer show in Jordan to date: Amman Computer Expo '92

By Zeld Nasser
Special to The Star

THE AMMAN Computer Expo '92 opened its doors to the public last Monday, under the patronage of HE Prime Minister Zeid Bin Shaker. Its venue is the International Fair and it welcomes visitors until 9pm every evening till next Friday.

The Expo has been organized by the Jordan Computer Society (JCS) as an annual event bringing together all major computer companies in the same show room.

Last year, visitors exceeded 22,000 in four days. This year the show is twice as big, 2000 square meters, and should attract bigger numbers. The big advantage of this year's Expo is the relaxing space and the wide variety of products on show, thanks to the bigger number of companies.

A shared complaint sounded by many concerned the location of the Expo. "It's just too far away from Amman," commented a visitor upon arriving at the International Fair in Marj Al-Hammam. Officials and employees at the stands also said that the distance visitors have to travel this year is a major factor for the disappointing turn-up.

Still, the Expo hall was full on the first night. A number of seminars were given and are still running, so remember to attend a couple before the show ends, since there is something for everybody.

For bargains, attractive deals were everywhere, although users are confused by the variety of PCs on offer and the difficulty of choice. 386 PCs are expected to lower in price anyway, so the Expo represents the beginning of this price-slashing craze.

This year's Expo is marked by the presence of more consumer electronics. Satellite dishes and accompanying receivers of all shapes and sizes were a major attraction at the Unisat stand attracting many visitors by monitors showing all sorts of international channels. Anybody who visited the Expo must have enjoyed the MTV music channel, which pumped music into the hall all day long.

Ghazal Computers & Electronics were also offering satellite dishes among their Lotus line of computers, which is assembled locally among a long list of com-



Minister Al-Kabatli opens the Expo Sunday

puter software which probably includes the biggest games library in town!

The Ideal Systems stand strikes you as being very nicely built, with red bars following the idea of independent booths for business, publishing, education, multi-media and others. The whole Macintosh range was on show, with friendly officials offering demonstrations to the public.

The Multi-Media booth was running the King's return celebrations in the form of a multi-media production set to music in parts with accompanying graphics.

Al-Raed Al-Arabi's stand was eye-catching, built like a castle with the impressive sight of 16 monitors stacked side by side, all connected to the same computer in the multi-media booths showing the full Leo PC range.

The Jordan Computer Center set up an equally impressive stand, showing off the full range of its Sakhr products from Al-Alamiah and a very interesting notebook computer with a removable LCD screen called the 'Cruiser'. Sakhr's Arabization for Windows had a strong presence and the multi-media booth was running a strong presentation of frame-capturing software from video tapes using a video card.

The four Jordanian companies representing IBM had strategically positioned stands at the Expo, with Gulf Business Machines (GBM) representing the IBM regional office. Computer & Electronics Bureau (CEB), displayed their Risc 6000 and Oracle hardware which have both done very

well during the last year. Sedco were showing a new line of terminals which they are going to Arabia. General Computer & Electronics (GCE) were showing their Tatum PCs, Brother printers and their IBM PS/2, spread on a double stand at the entrance. Special Systems Co. (SSC) offered attractive bargains on their Acer PCs with Acer chip-up technology and an interesting IBM PS/2 notebook.

Microsoft products were on show at the Specialized Technical Services (STS) stand with Microsoft Windows 3.1 with Arabic support packages, posters, T-shirts and much more. The Arabic Windows 3.1 poster was all over the Expo, which illustrates the importance of the product.

Mr Charles Allen, General Manager of Microsoft Middle East, made a special visit to the stand and gave a seminar on the product. The massive MIPS and a variety of supplies at the STS stand were also on show.

At the Jordan Data Systems stand the whole Compaq line of computers was on show including the new Prolinea and DeskPro lines and Hyundai PCs, but the Contura line was nowhere to be seen since it had all sold out!

Sinam Computer & Electronics revealed some very interesting medical equipment including a baby breathing monitor and a monitor for anaesthesia and critical care. Al-Ghanem Computer Systems & Solutions showed their Gateway 2000 PC, one of the most talked about American-made PCs on the market and an

GBM's voyage of discovery

GULF BUSINESS Machines is giving its major customers the opportunity to make a 'voyage of discovery' through the world of information technology in Bahrain in November.

For three days, directors and senior managers of client organizations will hear senior international executives of IBM and guest speakers developing the theme 'Navigating to Excellence — A GBM Partnership for Growth'.

The conference at the Regency Inter-Continental Hotel will be opened by HE Yousuf Ahmed Al-Shirawi, minister of development and industry and acting minister of state for cabinet affairs. Delegates from all over the Gulf States will be attending at the personal invitation of GBM general manager Mustafa Rugibani.

"The objective of this conference," says Mr Rugibani, "is to increase the mutual awareness, for GBM and its customers, of the opportunities to apply information technology in the pursuit of business excellence."

Following the opening ceremony ('The Launching') on 2 November by the minister and a keynote address by Mr Rugibani, delegates will receive an overview of the trends in information technology and the leadership role of IBM from Mr Lucio Stanca, president of IBM Southern Europe, Middle East and Africa.

During the first day's sessions — 'The Voyage' — five IBM experts from the UK and other European centers will explore the value of main frame computing in the 1990s, its infrastructure within the enterprise, the strategic role of UNIX/ATX for GBM, the banking and insurance industries and their past, present and future.

The day will conclude with an address 'The Many Faces of Oil' by Sir John Cadogan, FRS, director of research at British Petroleum.

The second day — 'New Horizons' — discusses new and future developments in equipment and applications, 'Arabic solutions', business computing into the next century, plant computing, education, oil and putting IT to work most effectively. Along with side IBM speakers there will be a guest address by Professor Lester Kershenbaum of Imperial College, London.

'New Horizons' will appropriately conclude with an address on research by Dr Parveen Chaudhary of the IBM Thomas J Watson Research Center, formerly Vice-President, Science, IBM.

The third morning's speakers, exploring 'The Way Ahead', will be discussing the revolution in computer networking and open systems, and considering the new issues for international network security which 'openness' brings in its wake.

Finally, as the 'voyage' reaches its conclusion, Colin Brook of the IBM consultancy organization 'Business Transformation' will reveal how strategic applications and planning for success will bring the enterprise into 'safe harbor'.

'Navigating to Excellence' is the first information technology conference on such a scale organized by the private sector in Bahrain. It is a demonstration of GBM's commitment to support the government in developing Bahrain as a special "center of excellence" for information technology in the Gulf. ■

interesting MicroTek scanner for the Macintosh.

The Autographics stand was showing its Document Archiving System, Geographic Information System and a breathtakingly large scale scanner called the 'FMS-AC', which is part of the Engineering Document Management System. It can scan an E-size CAD drawing in 129 seconds!

The special section dedicated to creative people in the computer field was interesting, but not well positioned since it was way at the back of the hall. The products, however, were remarkable. Mr Adeb Al-Rantawi showed a bi-lingual environment and editor working under Nafitha called 'ATE', offering mouse control on Nafitha, the ability to process read-only files and containing most of the commands used on WordStar 2000.

The program takes up 114KB at most and is written in the Pascal language. Mr Al-Sharief also showed a programming language called 'CHR', which stands for Character. It is written in Pascal and is specially developed to help users who have Hercules cards. This language enables the user to draw and design screens to be used with programs, adding an artistic touch.

A welcome surprise at the show was the return of Middle Eastern Computing magazine (MEC) after a year's absence. This time it is bi-lingual in format and covers a variety of interesting topics for JDI.

All in all, the Expo has succeeded in bringing all those interested and involved in the computer sector together, and represents another important computer event for the Jordanian computer user. Pay it a visit if you haven't already, you won't regret it. ■

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Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly

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The Star



JORDAN WEEK

An unconventional report on
Jordanian news and views

BCCI's Jordan creditors to appeal court ruling

Jordanian depositors immediately rejected a Luxembourg court decision Thursday which approved a \$1.7 billion compensation plan worked out by BCCI's liquidators and the Abu Dhabi majority shareholders. *Sawt Al Shaab* newspaper reported Friday that Jordanian depositors sent a cable to Mrs Maryse Welter, the principal judge in the three-person tribunal, in which they expressed their disappointment with the decision and promised to appeal. Lawyers for the depositors' organization in London also announced their rejection of the plan and their intention to appeal the court's ruling.

Jordanian depositors claim more than \$100 million in funds deposited at BCCI in London and other European branches before it was closed by the Bank of England two years ago.

Mrs Welter was quoted by the *Financial Times* as saying that creditors who objected to the plan had not come up with a credible alternative. She added

that separate legal action against Abu Dhabi would be "long and costly" and the result uncertain.

The ruling authorizes the liquidators to sign the \$1.7 billion "contribution agreement" with Abu Dhabi and the "pooling agreement", which would pool the proceeds from liquidation of BCCI's various operations. The deal has been sanctioned by British and Cayman Islands courts. Most Jordanian depositors, who received ballot forms from the liquidators, objected to the deal. The ballot is said to have received the backing of 90 percent of creditors who voted. This has

been a deciding factor in the court's decision to approve the package.

One of the Luxembourg liquidators announced that an appeal would delay payments to creditors for months.

Creditors opposing the scheme said the Luxembourg court should have taken into consideration the damning US report on the bank's collapse by Senator John Kerry and the UK report published last week by Lord Justice Bingham.

The Bingham report, commissioned jointly by the Bank of England and the British government, censured the Bank of England for failing to take appropriate action on receipt of a series of warnings over many years that fraud was taking place at BCCI. The report was also critical of Price Waterhouse, BCCI's auditor, and the government of Abu Dhabi for not passing information on the scale of the BCCI fraud.

The compensation plan will allow the liquidators to recover a dividend of 30 to 40 percent for

creditors. But the operation may take up to four years. Liquidators expect the first payment to be made in the middle of next year. Further payments would be made each time a further 5 per cent dividend was realized from the liquidation.

Mango defends court's handling of the Nafeer case

While defendants in the *Shahab Al Nafeer Al Islami* group await the resumption of their trial at the State Security Court, the military attorney general, Major-General Mohammad Mango, and the so-called national and popular groups criticizing the court's proceedings, appeared to be heading for a showdown. Gen. Mango refuted claims made in a statement released earlier in the week by parliamentarians and political activists, which criticized the court's handling of the case involving two Lower House deputies, and appeared to cast doubt on the constitutionality of the court itself.

In a hastily-arranged press meeting, Gen. Mango accused defense lawyers for defendants Laith Shbeilat and Sheikh Yacoub Qarrash, who withdrew from the case in protest, of trying to politicize the case. He defended the court's handling of the case and the trial proceedings so far, including the disputed issue of the Syrian witness who appeared in a secret session to testify against Mr Shbeilat (see *The Star* 22 October).

Gen. Mango challenged critics to cite a "single violation of the law in the prosecution or the court's handling of the case." He refuted claims made in the statement regarding the constitutionality of the State Security Court and the legality of the court's proceedings. He said he had sent officers to the press conference, which was held on Saturday by parliamentarians, lawyers and political activists, who "had recorded everything." The activists petitioned His Majesty the King to intervene and terminate the trial.

Mr Shbeilat and Sheikh Qarrash are reportedly still on a hunger strike. The Medical Association has sent representatives to examine the two men and said they were "weak, but in a medium physical condition."

Meanwhile, the State Security Court convened Sunday and received evidence presented by the prosecutor general. The court rejected a demand by Mr Shbeilat's appointed lawyer to recall the Syrian witness for questioning, saying the defense had had its chance on an earlier occasion. Both Mr Shbeilat and Sheikh Qarrash refused to present their own testimony. The court adjourned until Saturday when the prosecution is expected to rest.

Continued on page 3

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Editor's note: With less than a week remaining for the US presidential elections, Jordanians have been making their own predictions for the outcome. Most Jordanians realize that the fate of the one-year-old Middle East peace process, put together by the now beleaguered Bush Administration, is at stake. For the Arabs, the choice is between the "experienced" and tried President Bush, and the seemingly pro-Israel Governor Clinton. *The Star* staff talked to a number of Jordanian — and foreign — personalities about their own reading of the presidential race and the prospects for the peace process. Excerpts follow:

Mr Mahmoud El-Sherif,
Minister of Information

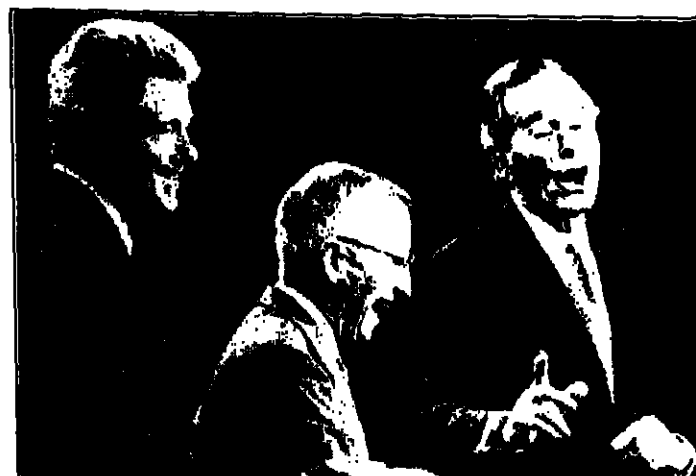
● If Bush is re-elected I don't think things will change as far as the peace process is concerned. Fears begin to mount if Mr Clinton is elected, but it is difficult to say how his election will affect the peace process at this stage. Mr Clinton has little experience in foreign policy, while (the Democratic Party) has vowed to move the US embassy to Jerusalem. This is a bad omen, but it could also be just another campaign promise. He may change his mind once he is in office.

On the other hand, the peace process has generated so much of its own dynamism that it is difficult to imagine that it will come to a complete halt if Mr Clinton is elected. The real questions are how Mr Clinton will deal with it (the process), what will his priorities be and whether his administration will lean towards Israel to the extent of forcing the Arabs to withdraw from the process. It is difficult to say; one has to wait and see.

Mr Rami Khouri, journalist

● I disagree with the prevalent line of thought that if Clinton is elected the peace talks will die out. The US attitude to the peace process is generally bipartisan; it

Jordanians, the peace process and US elections



The three candidates during one of their debates

is seen as something that is very much in the interest of the country — therefore it should be maintained.

Also, the attitude now is that the peace process no longer needs as much help from outside sponsors as there was in the beginning, as there is a whole new dynamic among both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Should Clinton win, he will keep the peace process up so as to take credit for it. Nor will he leave it for as long as the Middle East remains unstable. Its oil wealth is critical to the United States.

Whatever the election result, I don't think it will have any effect on US Mid-East policy. The Democrats have always been traditionally more pro-Israeli, but this distinction is meaningless. Israel is not the same country as it was 10 years ago vis-a-vis the US.

Mr Halim Abu Rahmeh, Jordan Exporters' Association

● The results of the US elections are unlikely to have an ef-

fect on the peace process because it is in the interest of any US administration to have stability in the Middle East. The momentum will remain the same if Mr Clinton is elected, but it all have to do with whom he chooses to be Secretary of State.

If I had a vote in the matter I would vote for Mr (Ross) Perot because I would like to see what he has in mind. At this stage he is unclear, but he promises to do a lot.

Mr Farid Hussein, member of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

● Should Clinton win, he will be more concerned with domestic issues and the peace process will suffer. I don't view it as being as high on his agenda as it is on Bush's.

So far, the Republican administration has been active in pursuing a reasonable Middle East solution. I hope that the thrust of the peace process is institutional rather than partisan, though reviewing the platform of the Democratic Party, one would sense a

somewhat more tilted position towards Israel.

The Jerusalem issue stands out in the Democratic platform, which departs from all previous administration policies of considering Tel Aviv as the capital of Israel. The Democratic platform advocates and recognizes Jerusalem as the capital, which concerns and disturbs Palestinians, Jordanians and other Arabs. However, I am consoled by the rumors that somebody like Carter may be appointed as special envoy to the Middle East; I view him as a very moral person.

Mr Salameh Nematt, correspondent for *Al Hayat* and the BBC

● If Clinton wins, American influence in the region will be reduced and he will downplay America's hand in the peace process. The Bush-Baker combination was a personal involvement; we will not see the same thing happening with Clinton because he attacked Bush for his heavy involvement in foreign policy at the expense of internal politics.

Personally, I think it is naive to think that Clinton has a magic formula to cure America's economic problems. I wouldn't be shocked if Mr Bush is re-elected. I would vote for him because of his personal involvement in the region and courage ... like when he stood up to thousands of lobbyists in Capitol Hill over the \$10 billion loan guarantees ... he demonstrated that there are limits beyond which Israel cannot go in determining US policy in the Middle East.

Ms Janet Orr, director of courses at the American Language Center, Amman

● Should Clinton be elected, it

may be partly true that the peace process could die out, because of his emphasis upon domestic issues.

However, I think the peace process will be continued in one way or another because Clinton respects the initiatives that Bush has made so far. I doubt that it will be as strong as under Bush and Baker, though.

We have shown the second and third presidential debates to our students as language exercises, and the response so far has been mixed. Most seem to be in favor of Clinton, with around 40 per cent in favor of Bush. Those for Clinton seem to have realized that America's domestic issues need to be addressed, and that Bush did not deal with them. The others see Bush as the "stronger" candidate, on account of his foreign policy.

Muhammad Al Zaben, American Language Center student

● If he is elected, Clinton will carry on with the peace process because he respects Bush and can learn from his experience in dealing with the Middle East. Hopefully he will have some new policies on the international level.

At 45, Clinton is a young man with new ideas for both America and the Arab world. I would vote for him because I don't think Bush did anything for his country over the last four years, and I don't think he offers anything for the future.

Bush was only ever in it for himself. He helped the Kuwaitis and the Gulf Arabs against the Iraqis while at the same time supporting Israel. He spoke of democracy but he was only interested in oil. The fact that he hasn't interfered with the war in (former) Yugoslavia shows that he only gets involved if there is something to be gained.

Most of the students don't like Bush because of the Gulf War and the problems it has brought to the region over the last two years, although some admire other things, such as his fight against communism.

Continued from page 2

Government raises subsidy to Press Association

Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ben Shakar approved an increase in annual government subsidy to the Press Association from JD 6000 to JD 15000. The official news agency Petra said the increase was made in appreciation of the "patriotic and responsible role played by Jordanian journalists and in support of the association."

Interregional electricity grid too good to be true

A unique project to link the national electricity grid in five countries will save member states an estimated \$7 billion. Syria's ministry of electricity announced that an agreement approved by the energy and electricity ministers of Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey will, when executed, decrease operational costs to \$4 billion in both Egypt and Turkey, \$2 billion in Syria and \$1 billion in Jordan.

The first phase in the project involves two grid links, one from south Amman to Hamima and Aleppo in Syria and all the way to southern Turkey. This grid should

be completed by the end of 1997.

The second grid link begins in Der Ezour in Syria going east to Al Qaim city in Iraq and then to south-eastern Turkey. This phase should be completed in nine years.

The longest of these interregional grids is that between Syria and Jordan. With a capacity of 300 megawatts, the cost is estimated at \$184 million.

The second phase of the project will involve linking the northern part of Amman with Al Qadiseyeh in Iraq on the one hand and Taba, Egypt, on the other, at a cost of \$800 million.

The cost of the first phase will be financed by the Arab Fund for Development, which will cover the \$150 million Jordan-Egypt link and the \$100 million Jordan-Syria link. The Islamic Bank for Development will also finance parts of the project.

US activist seeks local support for 'LA Eight'

Former delegate to Jesse Jackson Ms Barbara Lubin arrived in Jordan this week to rally support for the trial of the 'LA Eight' — seven Palestinians and one Kenyan who face deportation because of their support for Palestinian rights. The defendants were arrested in 1987 and charged with subversion.

Speaking from the Amman office of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), Ms Lubin made an impassioned appeal for up to \$400,000 in outstanding legal expenses to be raised. "This is an emergency and a crisis, both politically and financially," she said.

The group were charged by the US government with belonging to an organization that advocates doctrines of "world communism", alleging that they were members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). According to Ms Lubin, this is in contravention with last year's Congressional repeal of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, which dictates that aliens affiliated with a group advocating communism may be deported.

"These people committed no crime, nor did they engage in 'terrorist' activities," said Ms Lubin. "This trial is merely an attempt by the (US) government to test the new law in order to stifle legitimate political activities."

As founder of the Berkeley-based Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA), Ms Lubin fears that if the government succeeds in its case, non-profit organizations such as her own will be implicated with supporting 'terrorist' organizations such as the PLO. Besides supporting Palestinian relief efforts, MECA has also staged fund raising events for the sick and starving in Iraq.

Austrian Airlines now offers two weekly flights from Amman to Vienna. With immediate onward connections to all major European cities.

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Welcome To
AUSTRIAN
AIRLINES

By Pamela Dougherty
Special to The Star

JORDAN'S MINISTER of Water and Irrigation Samir Kavar is one of 16 ministers due to sign a new Mediterranean Charter for Water, to be finalized in Rome on 30 October. The charter is one result of the Mediterranean Water Conference, which brought ministers concerned with water and irrigation from the region together in the Italian capital for three days of discussions on the subject of their countries' fresh water resources.

Mr Kavar was accompanied at the conference, which was sponsored jointly by the Italian government and the European Community, by a team of water experts from the Ministry.

Building on a number of previous declarations, the new charter commits participants to action

Rome conference examines Mediterranean water scene

on their domestic water planning and management and to improved Euro-Mediterranean and international cooperation on water issues, taking into account their existing domestic legislation.

A second focus of the conference, says Dr Elias Salameh, Professor of Hydrology at Jordan University and member of the scientific committee which organized the event, was the presentation of papers by participants in which each outlined his country's water resources, their management and future prospects.

These papers provided the basis for discussions on three major

themes — the preservation of water resources and water demand control; the management of urban and rural water distribution systems; and waste water re-use and inter-basin water transfers.

Dr Salameh believes Jordan is one of the most effective Mediterranean countries in the use of its limited water resources. Popular awareness of the need to conserve water is high and average water use per capita is only 85 liters per day compared with 120-140 liters in Egypt, Syria and North Africa, 280-300 in the Gulf States and 250-350 in the northern Mediterranean states.

Jordan also has waste water

treatment plants for 70 per cent of the population, some industrial recycling of waste water and extensive drip irrigation in agriculture.

Cyprus is another water-poor country which has done a lot in terms of conservation, water harvesting and re-use, and Dr Salameh sees the conference as a useful forum in which countries can learn from each other's experiences.

He believes it is also important for countries to be aware of water quality and quantity so that they will not over-use it or use it inappropriately. He is concerned at the use of ground water from Qaa

Disi in southern Jordan for irrigation purposes. This water could be better used, he says, possibly for the Amman water supply.

There is also a danger that the pesticides and fertilizers used in agriculture in Disi will pollute the water, thus damaging Jordan's only strategic reserve.

In general, Dr Salameh says the countries of the dry southern edge of the Mediterranean need to re-think their approach to water resources and development. There are no easy or cheap supplies of new water available, desalination is expensive, bringing piped water into the region is both expensive and politically complex. In general, countries have to learn to tailor their activities to the available supply.

This means they must move from the current emphasis on irrigated agriculture, which creates jobs but is water-expensive, to types of industry, which can also create new jobs but without depleting the region's scarcest resources.

But it is a third element of the conference, a plan for the creation of a Mediterranean Water Network, that excites Dr Salameh. Many countries are doing good work in water development and conservation but even their neighboring states often do not know about it, he says. Information about work underway in distant regions such as South America or Australia is even harder to obtain.

A well structured network is the best way of spreading information in a rapid and systematic way and Dr Salameh hopes that practical steps will be taken to establish one as soon as possible. ■

EIB finances rehabilitation of water distribution networks

LUXEMBOURG — THE European Investment Bank (EIB) is lending 4.995 million ECUs for the improvement of the water distribution network of Irbid and Ramtha in northern Jordan. The loan provided under the third EC-Jordan financial protocol is for 20 years and benefits from a two per cent interest subsidy financed from community budgetary resources. The funds go to the government which on-lends them to the water authority of Jordan (WAJ).

Works due for completion by late 1995 comprise the laying of some 600 kilometers of polyethylene and iron pipes and the installation of 10,000 water meters. Improvements to the network will lead to a marked reduction of water losses presently reaching 40 per cent, while the meters will improve invoicing and income.

Irbid and Ramtha, with a combined population of 215,000, are the largest urban centers in northern Jordan. The rehabilitation of their water distribution network is part of the government's program for improving the preservation and management of the country's limited water resources. The present loan is the eighth in Jordan under the third protocol and fully utilizes the 63 million ECUs foreseen for EIB loans. In addition, 2 million ECUs were provided in the form of risk capital assistance drawn from the community budget and managed by the bank. ■



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By Samir Gharib

TV in Egypt becomes a national obsession

CAIRO — Egyptian television has a powerful hold over people's minds. It is an instrument of leisure, of information and — to a limited extent — of culture. It does not stop people reading newspapers or books, going to the cinema or theater or watching videos. But these activities are occasional, while television is a permanent and ubiquitous fixture.

Reasons for such an ascendancy are economic, political and cultural, but no-one has tried to analyze these reasons, using statistical data and making comparisons with other societies similar to our own. Maybe people prefer not to know. What is certain, however, is that television is one of the main subjects of conversation, at school, in offices, at home and in the street.

No serious study has been made of the influence this strange despot exercises in Egypt — or, to be more precise, of the whole bundle of contradictory effects it has on people of different age groups, social classes and cultural backgrounds.

An opportunity to appreciate the diversity of attitudes television inspires arose recently when a girl was raped in public in one of Cairo's most crowded squares.

This unprecedented event provoked a spate of comments on the role of television, ranging from the view that the media are responsible for such acts of license to passionate vindications of the media on the grounds that they perform an essential role in revealing the under-currents of

society.

Television is doubtless at one and the same time cause and effect, both a reflection and an accelerator of the erratic behavior patterns of a fragmented and rapidly changing society which, like so many in the Third World today, is in need of fixed landmarks. If in this context television sometimes seems like a rudderless ship, it is because society itself has no driving force capable of steering it in a definite direction or of giving it a coherent orientation.

It might be said that the objective of television is to persuade the maximum number of people to watch it for the maximum amount of time. And how effectively serials do that! No other country is so totally dominated by these shows, some, it is true, Egyptian-made but the majority American.

Do American soap operas arouse the same enthusiasm when they are shown in Europe? I think not, and for a reason that seems obvious. In Europe it is possible to meet people like those who appear on the screen. Their lifestyles and the roles they play are easily imaginable in the West. In Egypt, however, they are inconceivable, and that explains their immense success. They take us

out of ourselves.

There is a paradox here. American series and soap operas are full of images and attitudes that no Egyptian production would dare to present — for it would be immediately censored if it did. Why should something be permissible in an American production that is illicit in an Egyptian one? It is not for nothing that I spoke earlier of a rudderless ship.

Many Egyptian women take American small-screen heroines as their models, imitating their style of dressing and talking. As a result, little-known actresses can become veritable idols here.

An extraordinary ritual takes place when it is time for a serial to begin. All the members of the family stop whatever they have been doing and sit glued to the screen.

Last year the studio of a well-known painter, Mustapha Al Razaz, burned to the ground. No-one thought of going to his aid. The fire had started one evening in Ramadan, just at the moment when a popular serial was beginning.

During Ramadan television reigns supreme. This is partly because people have more time on their hands, but also because cinemas and theaters close and other public cultural activities come to

a halt.

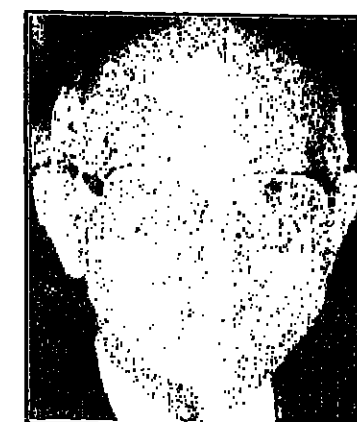
During Ramadan people go on a kind of television binge. Besides the normal shows, special serials are produced each year and are eagerly awaited by millions of viewers.

Above all, there are the immensely popular game-shows (*Jawazir*), featuring singing and dancing, which are forbidden in nightclubs and theaters during Ramadan.

In the course of the year about 20 serials are broadcast, each running for an average of 10 episodes lasting 45 minutes each. That means that the leading actors are on screen for almost eight hours.

Some, of course, continue for much longer than that. *Layali Al Helmya* has already notched up more than 100 episodes and is not yet finished. The heroes of this serial have so far appeared for more than 75 hours on screen in a show whose unprecedented success can no doubt be explained by the fact that it is a historical chronicle covering the last four decades in Egypt and features characters and situations with which everyone can identify.

Ra'afat El Haggan, based on a novel by Saleh Morsi, has also been exceptionally durable. Its



'Ra'afat El Haggan'

success draws both on American espionage films and on Egyptian patriotic sentiment.

Most of the serials, however, deal with social problems. In fact all the arts have for some years past tended to focus on social and political matters. This widespread phenomenon reflects a new state of mind. What is involved is not, strictly speaking, social criticism in the sense of an analysis of past or present failings suggesting future solutions.

Rather the programs fix viewers' attention on situations with which they can easily identify but whose interest is purely anecdotal. As such, they are deliberately kept from being anything more than entertainment without instructional value. What a pity! ■

Samir Gharib is an Egyptian journalist and art critic. This report is based on an article he wrote for the UNESCO Courier.

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OCTOBER SURPRISE: American Hostages in Iran and the Election of Ronald Reagan

By Gary Sick. Random House, Inc., New York and Random House Limited, Toronto, 1991. 278 pp. \$23.

Reviewed by Andrew I. Kilgore

IT WAS a traumatic year for President Jimmy Carter. His secret attempt in April 1980 to rescue 52 American diplomatic hostages imprisoned in Tehran had failed disastrously. Of eight rescue helicopters sent, three had been destroyed by accident, along with a C-130 aircraft. Eight airmen had been killed and no hostages were rescued.

The president's full public assumption of responsibility for the embarrassing fiasco did little to save him from growing charges of general fcklessness, especially in the face of an economy that seemed to be faltering. With Carter's re-election uncertain, the prize of the White House suddenly seemed attainable for the Republican Party.

As a matter of principle, Carter refused to provide arms to Iran in exchange for the hostages. He also rejected Israel's proposals that it be allowed to ransom the hostages with US arms.

Carter did, however, negotiate with Iran over the release of Iranian assets frozen in the US when the American hostages were seized. The dread possibility that this negotiation might be successful, releasing a surge of popular enthusiasm that might win Carter the election when the hostages came home, haunted Ronald Reagan's campaign organization. They worried about such an "October surprise" right up to the November day when Americans went to the polls and elected Reagan president.

The hostages, held prisoner for 444 days, were finally released at 12:05 pm on Jan. 20, 1981, five minutes after Ronald Reagan took the oath of office as president of the United States. The curious timing of the release caused some to wonder from that moment on whether the Reagan

campaign and the Iranians had made a secret deal to delay the hostage release until after the presidential election.

Such a reasonable deal by private operatives to thwart official US government efforts to free the hostages would amount to American political corruption on a cosmic level. Though morally indefensible, the political significance of such a deal would depend, to a large extent, on who had made it.

Did the candidate himself know? Or was it done behind his back by some amoral well-wisher? If there was a crime, the question, as in a classic mystery thriller, was who did it?

October Surprise author Gary Sick, a National Security Council staffer under Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and, briefly, Ronald Reagan, and the principal White House aide for Iran during

Begin knew that a re-elected Carter might lean even harder on Israel to achieve a real autonomy for the Palestinians. Sick reports that after Carter's April 1980 hostage rescue attempt had failed, Begin had gloated, "Jimmy Carter is finished."

the Iranian revolution and hostage crisis, wasn't much of a detective at first. A retired naval captain, he was simply too decent a man to contemplate that ambition for power by the Reagan campaign could lead it to betray America's diplomatic hostages, and indeed the United States.

As late as 1985, when he wrote his book *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter With Iran*, Sick still had not accepted that Jimmy Carter's political death might not have been solely from

Book review

The Iran factor in Reagan's rise to power



Reagan: His men did their best to thwart an October surprise

natural causes. Then two critical bits of information suggested that his basic trust had been misplaced.

First, a single sentence in *The New York Times* showed that Reagan campaign manager and CIA Director-to-be William Casey had been outside the United States on critical dates when his associates had claimed he was not. Second, a single date on an affidavit suggested that the Reagan administration was trying to cover its tracks immediately after the inauguration.

October Surprise is Gary Sick's comprehensive and often exciting real-life detective story on wheeling and dealing that risked the freedom and the lives of 52 American diplomats imprisoned in Tehran, and upon which the outcome of the 1980 presidential election probably hinged. One by one Sick poses the questions and advances his answers.

Did top Reagan campaign officials meet with a Middle Easterner in Washington before the election to discuss the hostages? Yes, a meeting occurred and the Reagan campaign officials included two future National Security Council directors: Richard Allen and Robert McFarlane. But no one could remember the name of the Middle Easterner, nor his nationality. Was the US government informed of this meeting? No. Although explored in intriguing detail by Sick, the main impression left with the reader by his account of the meeting is that the Republicans involved have been very successful at covering it up.

Did then-vice presidential candidate George Bush secretly fly to Paris to close a deal with the Iranians? Almost certainly not. Author Sick suggests that the Bush story may have been invented to throw future investigators off the real scent.

Did William Casey secretly meet Iranian negotiators in Madrid in July 1980 and in October 1980? The astonishing amount of

evidence doggedly ferreted out by Gary Sick leaves little doubt that this dean of wheeler-dealers was promising arms as well as the unfreezing of Iranian assets in the United States by an incoming Republican administration, if the hostages were held until after the election. However, a shadow of doubt always will remain because Casey is conveniently dead and unable to defend himself.

Sick describes with real insight what he calls the "furtive triangular alliance linking Iran, Ronald Reagan's campaign and Israel" and the fate of the hostages. And the fate of Jimmy Carter's presidency.

Each of the aforementioned "allies" had good reason to want to see Jimmy Carter defeated. Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic regime in Iran badly wanted an assured supply of arms and the unfreezing of its American assets. Israel badly wanted to sell arms to Iran under its "Doctrine of the Periphery," which calls for close Israeli relations with non-Arab Ethiopia, Turkey and Iran to counterbalance the Arabs. The Republican campaign simply wanted Carter to lose and their man to win, a goal it shared with Israel.

What Iran could do for the other two parties to the alliance was to hold the hostages to thwart a Carter would-be October surprise. Israel could, and did, begin to supply Iran with American military supplies, which it had in abundance, to match the mostly American equipment bought by the late Shah. Prime Minister Menachem Begin did so despite his explicit assurances to President Carter that Israel would observe the existing embargo on arms to Iran.

Gary Sick refers to Israel's own reason for wanting to see President Carter defeated. That was the president's demonstrated willingness to "lean" on Israel in the Arab-Israeli contest. Under US pressure, Israel had agreed to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula under the Carter-initiated Camp David accords. Begin knew that a re-elected Carter might lean even harder on Israel to achieve a real autonomy for the Palestinians. Sick reports that after Carter's April 1980 hostage rescue attempt had failed, Begin had gloated, "Jimmy Carter is finished."

The Reagan campaign itself didn't have much to offer to the Iranians, except promises that the US would be more sympathetic to Iran's needs if Reagan became president. This was persuasive, however, in view of President Carter's adamant refusal to provide arms to an Iran now being pressed by Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

In murder mysteries, real and fictional, detectives look for two things: opportunity and motive. In author Gary Sick's words, Israel had both the capacity (to deliver arms) and the incentive. October Surprise does not shout, "Israel, Israel, Israel!" That is not Sick's style.

That, however, is the conclusion the careful reader cannot avoid. Sick has written the book that had to be written on this subject. In recording the consequences of Carter's comical decision not to trade arms for hostages, Sick confirms the cynical maxim that "No good deed goes unpunished." America's ally, Israel, saw to that.

Andrew I. Kilgore, former US ambassador to Qatar, is the publisher of the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs.

AUSTRIA CELEBRATES its National Day this year at a time of great changes in Europe and the whole world. Thirty-seven years ago, on 26 October 1955, Austria became a fully recognized member of the international community when its parliament adopted the constitutional law on Austria's permanent neutrality.

Austria's neutrality throughout the Cold War and East-West confrontation guaranteed its sovereignty and security. However, the basic conditions of security policy in Europe have since changed profoundly. As a result Austria has to adapt her policy of neutrality to the new circumstances.

The revolutionary changes in Europe that started in 1989 with the fall of the iron curtain, have continued dramatically last year with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. But new problems have come along with these fundamental changes (economic decline, ecological disasters, new nationalism, armed conflicts stretching from former Yugoslavia to the Caucasian area) emphatically demonstrate that the heritage of Communism is obviously more disastrous than any one had foreseen.

After decades of "real socialism" with its sad history of oppression and lack of economic and social modernization, the countries in question see themselves confronted with a number of serious internal problems. This unstable internal situation constitutes the fertile soil which make the current revival of cultural and ethnic identities, positive as it may be in itself, often turn into nationalistic antagonisms developing occasionally into armed conflicts.

While Central and Eastern European countries are today free as individual states, the countries of Western Europe are moving closer to full integration. Through the European Community, the objective of European integration is the political as well as the economic and monetary Union as defined by the Maastricht treaty. In this way, the Community becomes the anchor of Europe's stability in the face of the new dangers of nationalistic destabilization in Eastern Europe.

These profound changes require a new European security system. The reshaping of the security-policy gives Europe the chance to put the protection of peace among its states on a new basis. Security and safety shall no longer be maintained against each other but with each other. The cooperation between equal partners on an institutional basis together with the necessary integration of democratic and self-determined states should guarantee a stable and peaceful future.

This approach seems the best answer to the new, more complex dimensions of security and the potential threats to it. The events in Central and Eastern Europe demonstrate sufficiently the relevance of economic and social factors for security policy. Today, mainly non-military risks like uncontrolled migration threaten the security of Europe as a whole.

On the institutional level, a European security system will have to be based upon already existing institutions with their specific experiences and possibilities. The outline of such a cooperation between EC, WEU, NATO and OSCE on the basis of the UN Charter can already be perceived. However, the key to a qualitative

change of European security structures will be an intensification of the process of European integration and thus a strengthening of the European Community.

Against these new facts, Austria is reshaping its security policy. The security of smaller states, in particular, will clearly be better protected by cooperation than by relying on their own limited forces.

A re-assessment of Austria's neutrality policy becomes inevitable. The new threats to Austria's security — ethnic conflicts, ecological disasters, new migrations — can simply no longer be tackled by the classical instruments of neutrality. On the contrary, a highly intensified cooperation on the international level is required.

Only by bringing Central and Eastern Europe close to Western Europe can the unstable situation — so dangerous for Austria's safety — be stabilized. Only the European Community will be able to fulfill this task. For this very reason the efforts of Austria to adhere to the EC are not only motivated by economic needs, but by security policy considerations as well. Austria's security can only be guaranteed in the framework of European solidarity.

The participation of a neutral state in the common foreign and security policy of the Community

does not pose problems since it refers to domains where a high degree of agreement with the Community's policy already exists, and this is not likely to change in the case of a further development of the Community's common policies. Austria's international obligations are clearly defined by the constitutional law on neutrality. Namely, no foreign military bases on Austrian territory and no participation in military alliances. On the other hand, all Austrian governments since 1955 have underlined that Austria's neutrality is not an ideological neutrality and that Austria has always considered herself as part of Western democracies.

Collective security and permanent neutrality are two instruments that will have to be evaluated within Austria's security policy. In this context, it might be worth mentioning that the question of neutrality does not arise in the case of sanctions decided by the UN Security Council against an aggressor (as in the case of Iraq, for example), thus allowing Austria to fully comply with her obligations as a UN member state.

With the fall of the communist regimes, Austria's economy has again regained its traditional role in the center of Europe. The strong increase of Austria's exports to the reform countries

proves that Austria's economy, with its more than 6000 joint ventures in the region, is already making full use of the new opportunities, therefore assisting actively those countries' economic reconstruction.

Apart from the success in its commerce with Eastern Europe, the exchange of goods, with the European Communities, traditionally the main partner of Austria's foreign trade, showed a further increase in 1991, now amounting to 68% of Austria's imports and 66% of her exports.

Despite these achievements, Austria's economy, due to the new challenges caused by the international division of labor, will have to concentrate on a further specialization of its industrial production. This will be all the more necessary as Austria's participation in the European Economic Area, probably effective by spring 1993, will further intensify Austria's economic links with the EEC countries even before the country's future membership in the Community.

To Austria, the adherence to the EEA means to enter into the largest economic association worldwide with a share of the international trade of about 46%. The future EEA's states' share of Austria's foreign trade today is about 75%.

At the Earth summit in Rio de

Janeiro, Austria promised to contribute to the building up of an ecologically oriented market economy through development aid, which has increased considerably last year.

Austria's high reputation abroad is largely due to its cultural achievements. Cultural relations to its neighbors in the East, limited during the decades of the Cold War, have intensified in many fields during the last few years, while maintaining the traditional worldwide contacts of Austria's cultural life (underlined just recently by the decision to build a new Austrian Institute in New York).

These contacts are not only built on Austria's famous cultural past, and are by no means meant as an arrogant gesture against others; they should be seen mainly as a contribution to the peaceful understanding among the peoples.

The 15th anniversary of the death of the great Austrian writers Stefan Zweig and Robert Musil and of the Austrian composer Alexander von Zemlinsky this year should be an opportunity to underline the historical importance of the work of these great Austrians. The voluntary death of the great warning voice against intolerance and barbarism, Stefan Zweig, in Brazil in February 1942, should be an appeal to fight the scourge of national hatred and war by means of constructive cultural work.

As a particular contribution in this sense, Austria financed the reconstruction of the building of the library Austria founded in Osijek, Croatia, in April 1991 and which was later destroyed by the Serbian army. ■

Afghani opium eases the pain of reconstruction

By Beena Sarwar

LAHORE: A BUMPER opium crop has come to Afghanistan's rescue, as the country attempts to deal with an economy in ruins, continuing power struggles between mujahedin groups, a collapsed infrastructure and the return of 15,000 refugees a day.

Poppy-growing is one of the few sure ways of earning a living, and farmers are supported by arms-and-drug-smuggling networks built up with the silent patronage of foreign governments during the 14-year war against the former Moscow-backed regime in Kabul.

Both Pakistan and the US have been accused of encouraging the opium trade as a way of financing weapons purchases. The result is that with a harvest of 3,000 tonnes this year, Afghanistan has overtaken Myanmar (Burma) as the world's biggest producer. The crop will be worth US\$24 billion by the time it hits the streets of Washington and London.

Most profits go to the drug mafias that control the trade, but the US\$100 earned by farmers for a kilo of raw opium is much welcomed in these difficult times.

Commented one farmer: "If we harvest seven kilos of opium, we will be able to survive the winter."

Abdul Wasi, aged 30, a recently repatriated farmer, told a reporter earlier this year: "I know it's against Islam, but I have to earn a living."

With farmers receiving



Harvesting the opium poppy

US\$0.25 for a kilo of wheat in June compared with US\$50 for opium, 15 kilos of opium produced on a typical small plot would earn six times more than 750 kilos of wheat which could be grown on the same parcel of land.

The hardy poppy also requires less care and irrigation than wheat or onions and can be grown on rugged, unlevelled land.

The country's rudimentary agricultural infrastructure has broken down. Most of the irrigation network is damaged and few paved roads are usable.

"If we don't have employment or irrigation to grow other crops," ask farmers, "how can we survive?" Some Western relief agencies, however, are reluctant to re-

pair war-damaged irrigation canals. "Why help the Afghans sell more opium?" asked an aid worker.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees expects the five million refugees who fled the fighting to be repatriated by November 1993. Each returning family receives a \$132 grant, plus 300 kilos of wheat from the World Food Program. The wheat lasts a family of seven about three months.

Many have nothing to return to, and farmers offered incentives by international agencies trying to cut poppy cultivation are often sceptical; they say promises of better irrigation and provision of fertilizer and seeds have often been broken. The UN has been funding the construction of

schools, clinics and roads in poppy-free areas, but has been unable to offset the need for cash and fear of the drug barons.

Few farmers are addicts, but 15 per cent of Afghan males between the ages of 18 and 35 in refugee camps take heroin. Many will take their habit home.

Addition is increasing elsewhere in South Asia: Neighbouring Pakistan has an estimated four million addicts.

Increasing numbers of farmers are expected to turn to opium as the country's economic crisis deepens. By growing opium, many farmers are simply doing what the development fundists recommend — helping themselves.

Alternative crops and jobs will reduce poppy growing only if the financial rewards approach those of opium. But some Western governments are demanding a tightening up of anti-narcotics laws and a drop in poppy production as a precondition for financial help. Of the US\$180 million asked by the UN for reconstruction projects, only US\$20 million has been forthcoming.

In a country in which the UN says 2,000 schools and hospitals have been destroyed, together with 34 per cent of towns and villages, and roads, villages and grazing lands are littered with 10 million mines, the real cost of rebuilding the country is estimated at between US\$6 and \$7 billion.

Beena Sarwar is a journalist with The Frontier Post in Pakistan.

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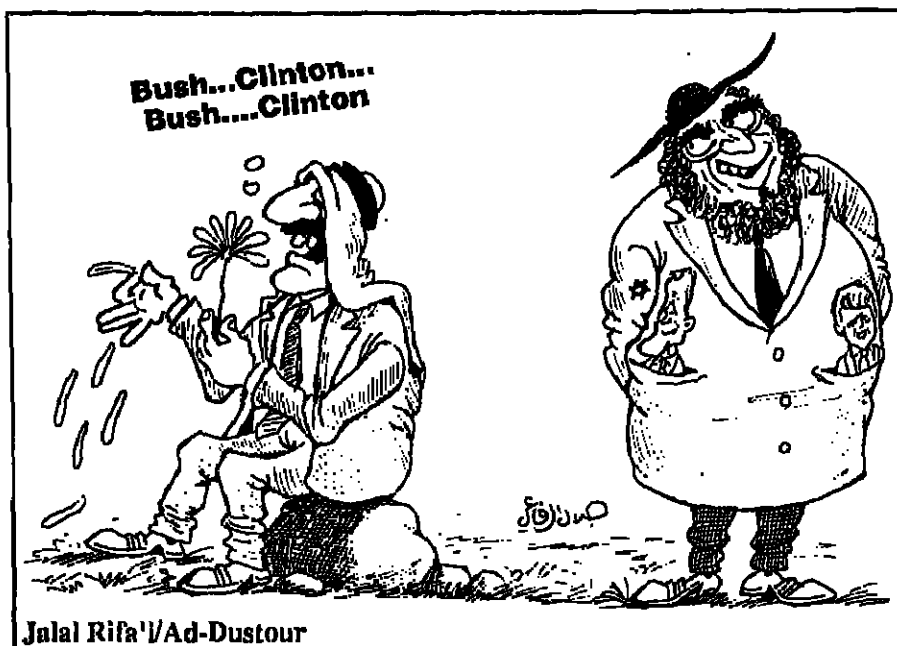
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Jalal Rifa' Ad-Dustour

Our Say....

Impossible mission?

KING HASSAN II of Morocco is a messenger of goodwill, but he is up against an impossible task. In his quest to inject some verve into the idle Arab body, the monarch will be dealing with petty alliances and petty fratricidal quarrels; the legacy of the now infamous Gulf War.

Without sounding too pessimistic, or too unrealistic, our modest intellectual contribution to the king's noble mission shall be limited to wishing him good luck and praying for his success in bringing the Arabs together during these trying times. As Jordanians, our main concern has been, and will continue to be, the strengthening of Arab solidarity, unity and prowess in standing up to external challenges.

But goodwill politics by itself will not do the trick. It is our fear that inter-Arab politics has been so marred by foreign interference, diverse political and intellectual evolution — or lack of it —, economic estrangement and isolationist thinking, that classical methods of reconciliation will probably fail or achieve only short-lived success.

Much to our frustration, the root causes of the Gulf crisis are thriving today. It is a sad fact that important political and economic initiatives currently lie with countries that have a myopic comprehension of the world and of its changing realities.

This yawning gap, which is separating the Arab East from the Arab West, the East Mediterranean countries from the Gulf states, has severed the already fragile threads which lumped these countries together. Emotional beckoning alone cannot salvage the region from its self-alienation.

Nor can words of wisdom. At a time when petty alliances are caving in, transitional social and political forces are playing havoc with a region that once promised to be the richest and wealthiest in the world. Today it is one of the most underdeveloped and heavily burdened parts of the globe, where social, political and economic imbalances are rife. It is striking that one and half years after the end of the Gulf War, not a workable alternative for inter-Arab relations has been made. Today Iraq staggers under UN sanctions, Libya shivers in its own cocoon, Egypt's political and economic structures are waning and the rest of the Arab countries are grappling with their own problems in their own closed environments.

Only one political process appears to be alive; the peace process. It is a product of the Gulf War, a creation of an outside power, but it brings with it the elusive mirage of peace on the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean. King Hassan's tour of the area has to do with salvaging this process. The reaction of each leader he met with to the prospects of peace and Arab reconciliation will remain an enigma.

For the Arabs to reach a comprehensive settlement with Israel, they must first come to terms with their own problems. Peace with Israel is not a piece of paper we can hang on our walls while continuing to live with our phobias. It is a commitment we must be prepared to make in return for a just settlement.

If the Gulf War generation of quasi-politicians, suffering from myopia, paranoia and suspicion, believe the status quo is worth keeping, they will be proven wrong. Any commitment we make at the peace table will be binding to all. The winds of change that are blowing through our region will not be barred by diplomatic boycotts and silly pretensions.

Unfortunately, we have not learned the lessons of the Gulf War. King Hassan's mission may be able to jolt the Arab body, but we don't think it can resurrect it. ■

Traveller's notebook An Occidental journey (1)

By Osama El-Sherif

THE IDEA of going back to the United States ten years after my last sojourn, haunted me. I had spent three years of my life as a student in America's Midwest. When I left I took with me a diversity of ideas, impressions and conceptions about America and the West. Since that day, I have been resisting the notion of going back. Unlike many of my compatriots, my fascination was with the East, although politically, economically and, alas, culturally our ties with the West have been multiplying to the extent of reaching a gridlock. We are neither Western nor Eastern any more. The modern Arab is a creature caught in a cultural cobweb; a no man's land.

I told a fellow journalist from Malaysia as we were having lunch in the luxurious Holiday Inn hotel on the outskirts of Atlanta, Georgia, that my fear will continue to be the kind of cultural legacy my son will be left with ten or 20 years from today.

Will he look at his Arab identity as part of the past? How will he reconcile the fact that he is an Arab, first and foremost, with a Western type of education, an alien set of values regarding work, life, family....

I told my friend that I am a product of the untimely confluence of two estranged cultures, that of the Arab East, and the all domineering West. The two have never been reconciled. They are suppressed within me, one taking over the other; my native culture giving way to an active, omnipresent one that is breaking all barriers.

My fear, I said to him, is that for my son the battle will be over before it even begins. His Arab culture will become some sort of an amusing folkloric tradition restricted to shaking a cup of Arabic coffee when he's done with drinking.

Why are we so frightened of the invasion of the so-called American culture? When I first went to the United States, I, like many other foreign students, went through a cultural shock of my own. As a reaction to an alien culture, I became more aware of that of my own. My culture was on the defensive, but in the process it set me apart from the rest. I was frightened of losing my identity, language, values and eventually my pride.

Everything we loath in our society must have its evil roots in a stereotyped American culture. American culture is a mental perception, a creation of our minds. It is how we perceive America to be; the antithesis of what our culture stands for. But while we limit our criticism of American culture to negative social behavior, it soon becomes evident that we too have lost touch with our own culture. For most Arabs, Arab culture is a relic of the past, it does not relate to the present, nor to the future. When we want to deal with the world around us, we resort to a Western values system because we perceive Western culture as functional, practical and successful.

A French friend of mine expressed his own fears about his indigenous culture giving way to a European one. He saw the French way of life under the influence of a hybrid of American culture; fast living, consumerism, rejection of what is seen as outdated values, etc.

American movies, dubbed in French, are shown on French television and in cinemas. MacDonald's restaurants are all over Paris. Euro Disney on the outskirts of Paris attract thousands of European tourists, who come to France to enjoy the Mickey Mouse culture.

Another friend who runs a successful photographic agency in Paris told me that

British, French and German magazines are paying enormous amounts of money for exclusive shots of American stars such as Kevin Costner, Mickey Rourke and Tom Cruise. "These stars are household names here. Everybody knows them," she said.

But why should we be afraid of a cultural invasion in today's world when we can do little to prevent it? In our society we have seen the birth of subcultures because of social, political and economic transformations, and we have learned to live with them. What we fail to understand is that imported values will not provide solutions to our particular problems. We live in one world, but our national agendas are different from one another.

Back in America, I told a group of American businessmen that we are not living in a global village, because a village would give you the sense of social harmony, economic and political parities. We are living in what David Halberstam calls a "wired world", a world divided according to the Hindu caste system as my Malaysian friend described it. "We are living in a global nightmare," I said.

We are united by our common anxieties. Fears of an environmental catastrophe, nuclear proliferation, a global outbreak of disease (like AIDS) and such. I said that Americans were not really interested in our individual problems, such as education, health, water shortage and economic reforms, just as we are not interested in their individual problems, such as inner city decay, the homeless, balancing the US budget, family values and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). We may pretend to care for each other, but actually we don't.

Yet our worlds are so mixed up with each other that no society is immune against the flood of a hybrid, hi-tech culture coming from the West.

In today's wired world, we are conscious of everything we do. A British journalist, based in Miami, who covered the Tiananmen Square demonstrations up to the government crackdown, told me that demonstrators were not addressing their own government, but were sending messages to the Western audience through the Western media. "That is why you had signs about democracy written in English and not Chinese," she said. My Malaysian friend told me that the Western media failed to register public reaction to the demonstrations at Tiananmen. "Peasants and the elderly were saying 'enough of this. Students belong in universities. They made their protest, but they should now return to schools,'" he told me.

An American publisher who has spent most of his life covering South Asia, told CNN senior officers when we met with them that it was an established fact that not a single student had died in Tiananmen Square in June 1990, and that most of those who died were in fact Chinese soldiers.

Through the prism of Western media we are now seeing the world. We are judging it in accordance with a new set of values whose roots are buried in the West. Our cultural schizophrenia is changing our way of life, our hopes and aspirations and the way we look at ourselves. How happy are we with this metamorphosis?

My trip to the States has given me a fresh dose of cultural backlash, very unlike the one I had when I went there, aged 20, 13 years ago. This time I was not reacting to the same America. The United States has changed; it had aged, and so had I. ■

An Asian worldview

US elections: A choice between Tweedledum and Tweedledee

By M.G.G. Pillai
in Atlanta, Georgia

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS in the United States, that quadrennial political festival, is packaged and sold to the voter like a bar of soap, reducing complex political issues into quotable sentences of a few words. There is no attempt to discuss the issues, or the party manifesto, which the Americans call platform, and the campaign meanders along as the candidates hope their slips of the tongue, their private lives, or their past, would not come under the kind of media scrutiny that drove Mr Gary Hart out of the runup to the democratic candidacy in 1988.

This year's presidential elections is one of the most significant in this century, where the winner will define the United States' international boundaries and the imperial baggage it would drop and retain. The average American is disturbed at his choice between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, President Bush of the Republican Party and Governor William Clinton of Arkansas, the Democratic candidate. Mr Ross Perot, the iconoclastic Texas billionaire, comes into the race on the backs of the uncommitted voter, of whom there are about 30 per cent, the Second World War and Vietnam War generation fed up with federal politics, which seems to be as far away from their lives as it possibly could be.

After the three "debates" — a grand word that means little more than three men answering questions thrown at them by a panel of reporters or from the audience — Mr Perot, with his no-nonsense approach to discussing the issues, won all three; Mr Bush lost all the debates and Mr Clinton appears set to win the elections. The "wild card" is Mr Perot. Would he be the nullifier that Mr George Wallace was in the 1972 presidential elections that ensured Mr Richard Nixon's re-election, or the major threat that President Theodore Roosevelt's independent candidacy in the 1912 elections that enabled the Democratic candidate, Professor Woodrow Wilson, into office?

Or would he throw the elections into the House of Representatives, as it has happened only once, in the late 19th century, when Congress elected Mr Rutherford Hayes president even though his opponent, Mr Horace Greeley had the majority of the votes? Would he cause an upset by forcing a draw and then remain to force three-cornered fights in subsequent elections throughout the country? No one is sure, although he, conceivably, would not.

The overseas fear of an America returning to its isolationist shell is real. The United States and the Soviet Union, isolationist by instinct, suddenly found themselves with a global role after the Second World War. For the next four-and-a-half decades, each attempted to contain the other in a global tit-for-tat superpower diplomacy. The Soviet Union gave up the fight in the mid-1980s, and the United States, with its anti-communist policies and rhetoric, finds itself a shredded "paper tiger" on the world stage.

Professor Robert Oppenheimer, the American nuclear scientist, ascribed their global quest for superpower dominance to two scorpions fighting to the death in a



Bush and Clinton: Evading the real issues

glass bottle, in which the winner also dies. The United States suddenly has no stomach for a global role, and the worry overseas is if she is in her death throes. The United States has played such a dominant role, rightly or wrongly, that a vacuum could lead to much uncertainty, even if that role is flawed and self-serving.

Within this strategic framework, how would Asia vote, if they could in this presidential election? West Asia remains an enigma, with the votes almost entirely for Mr Bush but only if Mr James Baker continues as Secretary of State. Since the Second World War, he gave the Arabs, and the Palestinians, the most hope for a settlement over Palestine. For this reason, Israel would rather he not be, and would opt for Mr Clinton, whose pro-Israel pronouncements have upset several Arab govern-



Saddam Hussein: No tactical perception

and not Washington, which it regards only as a market for its own products.

Beijing, on the other hand, dismisses Washington's attempts to impose such ideas as human rights into a six-thousand-year old society that gave the individual no rights. Her veto power in the United Nations Security Council at a time when Washington and, especially, Mr Bush, needs her support, makes her more comfortable with Mr Bush to enhance her own political and economic position in the world. South Korea, though neutral, feels she can get more from Washington than from either Mr Clinton or Mr Perot.

The Philippines, after calling Washington's bluff over the Subic Bay Naval Base, would put the knife into Mr Bush and vote for Mr Clinton. So would Indonesia and Malaysia, both stung by Washington attempts to categorize both as societies about to embrace fundamentalist Islam. Thailand's support for Mr Bush reinforces its need for more military aid; India's vote for Mr Bush stems from his administration's decision to allow a prominent regional security role and its gradual military and security disengagement from Pakistan.

Singapore, on the other hand, ardently supports Mr Bush, who can be relied upon to increase the United States military linkages with the island, as would Taiwan. For the same reason, Pakistan's anger with the Bush administration casts a vote for Mr Clinton, as would Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Burma would probably abstain, if



Perot: Appealing to the uncommitted voter

only because she is just gingerly stepping out into the world after three decades of isolation.

The overriding fear in Asia is an isolationist United States that could rupture her own economic development. The United States is the world's largest consumer market, and any attempt to change that by restrictive economic policies could boom-rang, and lead to a worldwide decline. The problem is that the United States wants to be both fish and fowl, without the wherewithal to be so. As its adventure in the Gulf War showed, Washington's superb tactical sense is hampered by an absence of strategic perceptions.

President Saddam Hussein, on the other hand, has the strategic perception without the tactical. But it is he would be around on November 4 to see his nemesis leave office or, if he wins, see him ditch away into oblivion. It is only the United States and, possibly, Britain, that believes that the war has ended; no one in Iraq or in most of West Asia believes it has.

While Washington may have been the conquering army in the Gulf War, the Arabs do not think so. The Kuwaitis and Saudis, having paid for some of the costs of that war, regard them as mercenaries as they do their Indian gardeners, Filipino maids and Pakistani drivers. She may have won the war, but the Arab would still not allow them into their drawing rooms. A similar perception pervades in Asia, where she has been bested by countries which she once ruled. More than the Gulf War having erased the Vietnam War syndrome, it wiped out the United States desire to re-establish its position in the world.

It is into this conundrum of United States policy that Mr Perot has jumped into. As the three presidential debates showed, he tried to discuss issues but Tweedledum and Tweedledee preferred to attack each other. Mr Perot caused Mr Bush and Mr Clinton to dissemble: His 30-minute paid political ad — an "infotainment," as one newspaper called it — in which he discussed the issues had a prime time television viewership that would force adrenalin into the veins of many Hollywood television producers.

But whoever wins would have to take an undeclared, disenfranchised minority and their views into account in framing a policy out of the Cold War epoch. But none has the gumption, or the desire, to want to do that although each could be expected to meddle in regional international affairs for political mileage at home. And that worries foreigners more than any other in the current presidential elections. ■

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Section française du Star

Relance économique

La Jordanie sort la tête de l'eau

Après les heures noires de la guerre du Golfe, qui laissaient entrevoir une catastrophe économique, le royaume se redresse petit à petit

"LA JORDANIE n'est plus au fond du gouffre" affirme Pierre Boedoz, Conseiller commercial français. Un certain nombre d'indicateurs permettent de l'attester. Le programme d'ajustement structurel du FMI, suspendu en raison de la guerre du Golfe et du retour des réfugiés, a pu reprendre en 1991. Et ce grâce à une situation économique favorable. Le déficit budgétaire est en baisse: il est passé de 233 millions de dinars en 1991 à 107 millions en 1992. L'inflation, due en partie aux dévaluations passées, serait négative sur les six premiers mois de 1992. Celle-ci était de l'ordre de 6,8% en 1991 et de 10% en 1990. Autre chiffre encourageant: l'augmentation du PIB de 10% en 1991 contre seulement 0,8% en 1990.

Rapatriés intégrés

La crainte d'une absorption difficile de la vague des 300.000 rapatriés du Golfe semble se dissiper. "Nous avons toujours pensé que leur retour était quelque chose de positif pour la Jordanie" affirme le Conseiller commercial français. Ces Palestiniens qui ont dû quitter le Koweït et les pays du Golfe, sont revenus avec des économies en poche.

Le rapatriement de leurs épargnes privées a rapporté pas moins de 800 millions de dollars à la Jordanie. C'est un facteur important dans un pays qui dispose de 1,6 milliard de réserves en devises, l'équivalent de 8 mois d'importations. "C'est considérable" s'exclame Pierre Boedoz. Cette population s'est intégrée dans la société jordanienne, elle n'est pas très touchée par le chômage (15 à 20%) ajoute-t-il. Les rapatriés du Golfe de Jordanie, pour la plupart, forment une classe d'employés qualifiés du secteur tertiaire. Autrefois, il n'est pas trop fort de dire qu'ils faisaient tourner la machine koweïtienne.

Malgré cette éclaircie, la Jordanie garde toujours "une épée de Damoclès sur la tête" selon les termes de Pierre Boedoz, Conseiller commercial français. Sa dette extérieure est de l'ordre de 7,2 milliards de dollars. Celle-ci a été contractée par le royaume, essentiellement pour le développement des infrastructures. Elle est aussi le résultat de la disparition de l'aide arabe des pays du Golfe depuis 1990.

Pour 1992, la Jordanie a besoin d'un financement extérieur complémentaire de l'ordre du demi milliard de dollars. "Même les Clubs de Paris et de Londres ne résoudront pas la situation, si l'on ne fait que des réajustements", c'est à chaque fois reculer pour mieux sauter" affirme Pierre Boedoz.

Avec le ministre des Finances, Basel Jaradneh, la priorité n'est pas aux grands contrats publics. Il faut à tout prix éviter d'élargir la dette. Porte de sortie: le gouvernement jordanien met l'accent sur le secteur privé. "Il a beaucoup d'argent et est à la recherche de possibilités d'investissements" affirme Pierre Boedoz.

Ce développement peut s'effectuer dans le commerce courant du sous-secteur de partenariat industriel. D'autant que la nouvelle loi du 30 avril 1992 favorise les investissements étrangers. En Jordanie, après obtention d'un accord gouvernemental, une compagnie étrangère est libre d'investir dans les secteurs de l'industrie, du tourisme, de la santé, de l'agriculture et du logement.

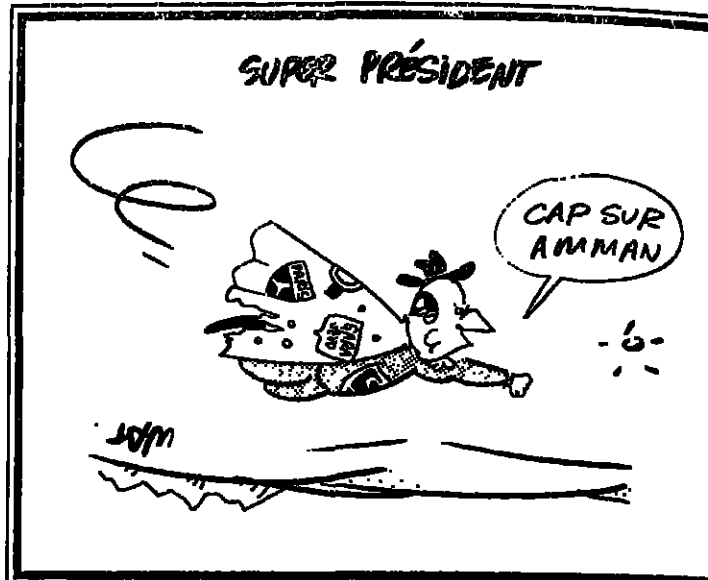
Cette activité est restreinte pour



Pierre Boedoz

le commerce, les transports et la construction où la part étrangère ne peut excéder 49%. Le secteur privé local est à la recherche de partenaires étrangers. Il fait les yeux doux à des investisseurs qui portent dans leurs valises de nouveaux produits, de nouvelles techniques et peut-être de nouvelles possibilités de marchés.

Avant la guerre, la Jordanie "vivait essentiellement de l'Irak" affirme Pierre Boedoz. Aujourd'hui, sa balance commerciale accuse un déficit d'un milliard de dinars. Ce qui peut à terme avoir des conséquences néfastes, comme une nouvelle dé-



L'EDITO

de Amine Ghannouchi

Profiter du vide

HIER, LES les négociateurs moyen-orientaux ont ajourné le septième round pour attendre le verdict électoral américain. Le manque de progrès substantiel lors de ces pourparlers risque d'élargir le vide dû aux élections américaines. Depuis Madrid, le rôle de catalyseur de l'administration sortante était significatif.

Par ailleurs, d'autres parties concernées par la situation au Moyen-Orient entrent en jeu. L'annonce de la visite du Président français en Israël et en Jordanie à la fin du mois de novembre, constitue une affirmation de l'importance du rôle de l'Europe, ainsi que de celui d'autres puissances internationales. La recherche d'une solution ne peut être le monopole d'un seul pays.

Le succès de la visite du Président français ne devrait pas faire l'objet d'énormes doutes, eu égard aux relations solides qui lient le Président socialiste aux leaders du Parti travailliste au pouvoir en Israël. L'étape jordanienne de la visite de Mitterrand répond à une requête arabe pour un rôle européen plus actif dans la recherche de la paix. Il n'est dans l'intérêt de personne que les Européens s'éclipsent dès que les Américains auront choisi leur nouveau chef de l'administration.

Sur le plan arabe, la tournée du roi Hassan II du Maroc dans la région vise à effacer les traces des déchirements provoqués par la guerre du Golfe. Le Souverain marocain, favorisé par des liens spéciaux avec le Président français et les chefs travaillistes israéliens contribuera à débayer le terrain. Une relance du processus de paix après les élections américaines a davantage de chances de succès avec une participation plus active de l'ONU.

Francis Mazoyer

Portrait

En garde messieurs!

Ali Chehada, champion jordanien d'escrime! Il existe en chair et en os et apprend le français depuis un an. Son but: devenir arbitre international

"PRETS, ALLEZ, touché...". Ces termes font partie du vocabulaire d'Ali Chehada, 24 ans, champion jordanien d'escrime. C'est en 1989, lors des jeux arabes au Koweït qu'Ali fait une rencontre déterminante. "Vous voulez devenir juge, s'étonne un arbitre allemand, mais au moins parlez-vous français?". Ali ne ne comprend pas le sens de la question. "Vous avez trois niveaux différents, précise l'Allemand, si vous connaissez le Français, vous faites partie de la catégorie B, sinon vous devez vous contenter de la C".

Arbitre International

Ali Chehada n'hésite pas une seconde. Il va entamer le stage pour devenir juge de haut rang et les cours de français: "J'aime beaucoup cette langue, dans deux ans je vais me rendre en France pour continuer mes études". Ali s'accroche. Après une année de cours au Centre culturel français d'Amman, ce jeune champion veut obtenir une maîtrise. Un rêve, mais aussi la condition sine qua non pour poursuivre sa carrière. "Un juge international doit parler cette langue correctement... Il ne s'agit pas seulement de diriger les escrimeurs, mais il faut aussi leur expliquer leurs fautes. Par exemple, ils doivent savoir pourquoi ils reçoivent un avertissement".

L'aventure de ce Jordanien

dans le monde de l'escrime a débuté par un pur hasard. En 1982, cet habitant de Jebel Akhza (Amman) entame une discussion avec son voisin de palier, responsable de la Fédération jordanienne. A cette époque, celle-ci regroupe une petite dizaine de joueurs. "Je voulais jouer au football" confie Ali Chehada. Son voisin le conseille et le ramène dans le droit chemin. "Au départ je ne connaissais pas du tout ce sport" ajoute-t-il. Deuxième problème: cela coûte très cher. Un masque aux normes de la Fédération s'achète pour 100 dollars, l'épée 50 dollars, sans oublier la combinaison de l'ordre de 300 dollars. Hors de prix! Avec l'aide de son père, commerçant aisé, Ali fait venir sa panoplie d'escrimeur de l'étranger. Impossible de trouver en Jordanie.

Ali Chehada se prend au jeu. "J'ai aimé ce sport, tout d'abord parce que c'était nouveau en Jordanie...". La première année, Ali n'obtient pas de résultat. Il travaille d'arrache-pied. Chaque matin, il se rend à l'Université. L'après-midi, il consacre quatre heures de son temps à l'entraînement. Le week-end, Ali consacre sa vie à l'escrime.

Les premières satisfactions ne se font pas attendre. A l'occasion de l'anniversaire du roi Hussein, en novembre 1986, Ali Chehada remporte sa première médaille d'or. En finale, il gagne la partie 5-1 face à un escrimeur koweï-

en. Un score qui restera à jamais gravé dans sa mémoire.

Un an plus tard, Ali Chehada revient d'une compétition inter-arabe pour juniors à Alexandrie avec une autre médaille d'or en poche. A Bagdad en 1988, il obtient la troisième place de la compétition "Saddam Hussein". Le couronnement de sa carrière: une participation sous les couleurs de la Jordanie aux Jeux Olympiques de Séoul en 1988. "C'était une compétition extrêmement dure", avoue le champion jordanien. Il ajoute un peu déçu: "Nous n'avons obtenu aucune place".

Ali Chehada ne se décourage pas: "Si un jour j'ai la chance d'habiter un pays européen, je suis certain de pouvoir devenir un bon escrimeur, parce que



Ali Chehada sur le podium

"J'aurais un bon entraînement...". Pour le moment, Ali se contente de son rang. Mais la passion et l'ambition l'animent et l'attirent

vers la France. Le pays où l'on parle la langue de l'escrime.

Francis Mazoyer

Vernissage le 2 novembre au CCF

Rula Shukairy ou l'abstraction baroque

Si vous lui demandez pourquoi il aime les peintures de Rula Shukairy, le directeur du CCF, nouvelle "must-galerie d'Amman", élude la question. Seul le Jourdain est en mesure de dévoiler sa pensée

Par Noël Favrelière

QUAND ON se remémore les peintures que Rula Shukairy expose, il y a quelques années et qu'on regarde ce qu'elle expose maintenant, on se dit qu'elle a changé le bout de sa lorgnette. Avant, elle avait une vision cosmique, extra-terrestre. Aujourd'hui, c'est vers le sol qu'elle regarde, sa vision est ultra-terrestre, car elle est attirée par le monde minéral qu'elle cherche à pénétrer. Autrefois, ses paysages intérieurs étaient comme des prières à la lumière pour qu'elle donne forme au néant. C'était un non-intellectuel, mais avant, qui faisait penser à ce que pourrait être des rêves d'alchimiste, des métamorphoses d'agate ou des reflets dans l'œil de la Méduse.

Clair et obscur

On pouvait être tenté de recon-

struction de chérubins, là, de sombres cavernes, lieux propices à des monstres. Il n'en était rien. Rula Shukairy bannissait alors toute référence au réel et traçait une sorte de calligraphie cosmique sur des labyrinthes sans commencement ni fin. Aujourd'hui, peut-être aussi pour s'éloigner du décoratif, les œuvres récentes font apparaître comme un repli vers le réel, le concret, et, cependant, ce nouvel art reste baroque et devient plus précieux.

Fascinée par les mystères du monde minéral, l'artiste fait apparaître dans ses dernières œuvres des structures qui sont comme une trame secrète tissant un réel que l'on devine indéchiffrable. Elle est animée à la fois d'une passion de clarté et d'une passion d'obscur, qui s'épousent ou se combattent sans qu'on sache laquelle qui des deux l'emportera. Ses peintures sont ainsi des correspondances dévoilées entre les

mystères des règnes naturels et des rêves, et d'autres correspondances, cachées telles-là, entre le monde et l'esprit.

Mais, bien que grouillantes d'idées, ses œuvres sont vides de pensées théoriques. On peut dire qu'elles s'apparentent à l'essai en littérature, car libres de facture sur un sujet inépuisable. Cela nous donne des peintures d'un fantastique serein, quasi-naturel, et intemporelles tant dans leur propos que dans leur manière.

Coexistant entre une cohérence de l'imaginaire et une logique de l'imaginaire, l'univers de Rula Shukairy est tout à la fois minéral, parce que structuré, stratifié, et végétal, parce que libre et déroulant comme une plante grimpante.

Cette timidité à trancher reflète sans doute un refus de se mettre à l'abri d'équipes et de se fonder dans l'univers comme l'artiste Zou, hier, dans l'espace, aujourd'hui dans la forme. Et dans ce



monde minéral que Rula Shukairy s'approprie, s'installent une harmonie et un équilibre entre vide et plein, entre proche et lointain, entre taches et lignes, entre canaux et couleurs qui s'opposent.

Mais il n'y a pas de réelle rupture entre les œuvres d'hier et celles d'aujourd'hui, car elles semblent toutes faites pour être

visitées, pénétrées, plus que pour être seulement contemplées. Et si vous me demandez pourquoi j'aime les peintures de Rula Shukairy, demandez-moi aussi pourquoi on aime les pierres précieuses, et pourquoi, moi, j'aime particulièrement le ciel de nuit, le mult au-dessus d'Amman. N.F. (Directeur du Centre Culturel Français)

AROUND TOWN

Congratulations!
Graduations, appointments, engagements, weddings, newborns, promotions, special awards, excellent achievements.....
Drop us a line and send a photo...we will run it free of charge in The Star's People and Events page.



Under the patronage of Their Royal Highnesses Prince Faisal bin Al Hussein and Princess Alia Al Faisal, the Promise Welfare Society in cooperation with Hotel InterContinental Jordan organized a Finnish fashion show and gala dinner at Amra Hotel on Tuesday 27 October. Under the title "Finland in Jordan", the event included a fashion show featuring latest winter designs presented by Finnish models, famous Finnish singer Arja Koriseva and her orchestra, and music and dancing. Guests were welcomed by Finnish ambassador to Jordan Mr Arto Kurittu who paid special tribute to the woman who made this event possible Ms Ritta Tainola, a well known journalist from Finland. Also present were HRH Princess Alia and her husband Mr Zaid Jumaa, Minister of Tourism Mr Yanal Hikmat and Dr and Mrs Mohammad Idwan of the Royal Hashemite Court in addition to other guests.

Mr K. Drier, divisional director of trade fairs and exhibitions for AMK Berlin, held a conference last Wednesday at the Marriott Hotel. The conference was also presented by Mr Shafeek Tiliawi of I. Tiliawi and Sons Co, and his son Muhammad.

Mr Drier revealed a number of details about next year's International Audio and Video Fair, to be held in Berlin, and which is considered to be the most important trade fair for all kinds of consumer electronics products.

It has evolved into the world's leading trade fair for the taking and placing of orders in this sector. Over 90 per cent of consumer electronics companies on the world market attend this event, bringing hundreds of thousands of visitors, including 100,000 trade visitors.

The skilled trades and media come to Berlin in order to examine and test the latest range of consumer electronics equipment and to establish new market trends.

Mr Drier also mentioned that the fair will cover an area of 500 square meters, with 900 companies participating from all over the world, including Germany.

the US, Japan, China and all Far Eastern countries.

At the end of the meeting Mr Drier presented a documentary film about the International Audio and Video Fair '93.

Different, the new Jordanian band, held a concert last Thursday at the CMS School. The band will stage another performance on 4 November at the University of Jordan. The concert will mostly feature classical rock tunes, played by Nader, Nizar and sung by their lead vocalist Ghasan Nasser. See you there!

The Marriott Hotel, in co-operation with the German Embassy, held a reception last Monday 26 October, on the occasion of the German week. Attending the reception were the district sales manager of Jordan and Mrs Atallah Keshek, among many personalities from the press.

The Jordan International Service Agency and the Al-Ahmediyya Institute would like to congratulate Dr Abdel Jawad on his new job, and the beginning of his new dentistry practice.

1978 version of "Superman" is full of adventure, heroes and villains, earth-shaking special effects and wit.

EXHIBITIONS:

An exhibition of paintings by the Jordanian artist Omar Hamdan Shauhan is now open at the Alla Art Gallery. Opened yesterday by HRH Princess Alia, the exhibition will run until 5 November.

The Second Sudanese Productions Show was opened yesterday by Dr Abdullah Al Naour, Minister of Trade and Industry. Situated at the exhibition hall in Al Jamil's Street, the event lasts until 7 November.

THEATRE:

Showing tonight at the Plaza Hotel will be the British play "A Bedfull of Foreigners", starring top British comedian Terry Scott.

Described as "a brilliant play to tickle your funny bone", this comedy is the latest British Airways Dinner Theatre production and has also run as a successful West-End show.



Kurt Reimann



Franz Zöchbauer

Austrian launches Amman-Vienna service

On the occasion of Austrian Airlines' first scheduled Vienna-Amman-Vienna flight, a conference was held at the Plaza Hotel on Monday 26 October.

The conference was presented by representatives of Austrian Airlines and Mr Nasser Jawar of Petra Tours Jordan, agent for Austrian Airlines.

Mr Franz Zöchbauer, vice president of overseas marketing, identified Vienna-based Austrian Airlines by its network, which includes Asia, America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Its scheduled service are operated to 67 cities in 42 countries, and have now gained an international reputation for being a European link between West and East.

Mr Zöchbauer also referred to economic and trade relations between the Arab World and Europe. "Both business and leisure traffic have expanded over the last year in a very positive way," he said. "The Gulf crisis and the war caused a set-back, but already as of March 1991, Austrian Airlines resumed all services to the Middle East with the exception of Baghdad and Kuwait."

The Jordanian capital Amman is Austrian Airlines' twelfth destination in the Arab world, and there are now two flights a week Amman-Vienna, and two flights Vienna-Amman.

As for business class passengers, Austrian Airlines offer lounges at Amman, Istanbul, Lameca, Damascus, Riyadh, Cairo and Vienna airports. A luxurious service is available in most of these cities and can be booked simply when making arrangements for Austrian Airlines flights.

Moreover, Mr Zöchbauer described Vienna International Airport as "the ideal transfer and transit point right in the Middle of Europe."

Also, on the occasion of the Austrian National Day and the inaugurated flight of Austrian Airlines to Amman, Austrian Chargé d'Affaires, Werner Winkler, Commercial Attaché Dr Michael Angerer and the Regional Manager of Austrian Airlines Kurt Reimann held a reception last Monday, 26 October, at the Plaza Hotel.



The National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation

The British Council

in association with

ROYAL JORDANIAN CONSERVATORY

MAGNA CARTA

Concert of Popular Acoustic Music

Saturday, 7 November 1992 - 8:00 p.m.
Amman: Baccalaureate School - Auditorium

In the programme songs by: Magna Carta, The Beatles, Paul Simon, Suzanne Vega and others

Tickets at J.S. & S. are available at:
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Amman, at 66123
The Royal Conservatory, Tel: 66026
Amman, at 66026
Amman, at 66026
The National Music Conservatory, Tel: 66026
Amman, at 66026

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on
Jordan
Television
from
31 October
to
6 November

ENGLISH PROGRAM

SATURDAY

8:30 — America's Funniest Home Videos
9:00 — Perspective
9:30 — Varieties
10:00 — News in English
10:20 — Feature Film: 'The Final Heist'. Starring Jan-Michael Vincent. A famous art thief makes his final heist in the business.

SUNDAY

8:30 — Coach
9:10 — Documentary: 'The Natural World'
10:00 — News in English
10:20 — Law and Order

MONDAY

8:30 — Sibs
9:10 — A Fine Romance
10:00 — News in English
10:20 — Red Fox

TUESDAY

8:30 — The Golden Girls
9:30 — Malgret. Malgret is a fictitious character created by George Simon. Granada Television have adapted six of Simon's novels into a drama series starring actor Michael Gambon in the title role.
10:00 — News in English
10:20 — When the Lion Roars

WEDNESDAY

8:30 — Saved By The Bell
9:10 — Cluedo
10:00 — News in English
10:20 — The Cowra Breakout.

A true story about the events at the Cowra prisoners' camp for Japanese soldiers during World War II, that were not revealed for more than thirty years.

THURSDAY

8:30 — Uncle Buck
9:10 — Civil Wars
10:00 — News in English
10:20 — Movie of the Week. 'Lucky Day', starring Amy Madigan. The story of a mentally capped girl who wins two million dollars.

FRIDAY

8:30 — Too Close for Comfort
9:10 — Nonni and Manni
10:00 — News in English
10:20 — The Antagonists

FRENCH PROGRAM

SAMEDI

6:00 — Au Clair de Lune
6:05 — Les Aventures du Bosco
6:40 — Opération Mozart
7:00 — News in French
7:15 — Fenêtre Sur. A local

Pop Singles

1. End of the Road, Boys II Men, Motown
2. She's Playing Hard To Get, Hi-Five, RCA
3. Humpin' Around, Bobby Brown, MCA
4. Sometimes Love Just Ain't Enough, Patty Smyth, MC
5. Baby-Baby-Baby, TLC, Arista
6. Jump Around, House of Pain, Tommy Boy
7. I'd Die Without You, PM Dawn, Arista

Top Video Rentals

1. Final Analysis, Richard Gere, Kim Basinger, Warner Home Video (R-1992)
2. Fried Green Tomatoes, Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, MCA/Universal Home Video.
3. White Men Can't Jump, Woody Harrelson, Wesley Snipes, Fox Video.
4. The Lawnmower Man, Pierce Brosnan, Jeff Fahey, Columbia Tristar Home Video.
5. Medicine Man, Sean Connery, Lorraine Bracco, Hollywood Home Video.

Furnished Garden Flat for Rent Near 5th Circle

2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, sitting room, dining room, modern kitchen with American appliances (fridge, cooker, and washing machine). Fully carpeted, centrally heated, coloured TV, vacuum cleaner. Own entrance, telephone, garage, and garden.

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HOROSCOPE

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆



ARIES (21 March-19 April): Since the weekend's your time to howl, you'd better get all your work done early.

TAURUS (20 April-20 May): Choose a quiet person to be with, and a deeper friendship could develop.

GEMINI (21 May-20 June): If you have any reading to do, or papers to write, get them out of the way early.

CANCER (21 June-22 July): This week is good for romance, but you might not feel like doing much else.

LEO (23 July-22 August): A battle could produce an excellent friendship with an adversary.

VIRGO (23 August-22 October): You will probably be happiest and most productive this week. Catch up on your housework.

LIBRA (23 September-22 October): A great time for finding information and writing letters. Don't spend any money, however.

SCORPIO (23 October-21 November): You rule this week, and next week too for that matter. Monday may be horrid, however.

SAGITTARIUS (22 November-21 December): Your brilliance will only be matched by your tendency to drive people crazy on Tuesday.

CAPRICORN (22 December-19 January): Tuesday you'll get most of your work done before dinner. So, make sure you have fun after then.

AQUARIUS (20 January-18 February): You'll have an excellent week in many ways. Don't expect to challenge authority and win, however.

PISCES (19 February-20 March): Hold your fire the first couple of days this week. Something you find irritating will dissipate.

Dining Out



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طاروتيل

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• Lebanese Home Dishes
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For A Superb Meal Think of

(Amigo Nabeel)

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Dos Palermas Mexican Cuisine



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Jebel Amman - First Circle

Agenda

FILMS:

On Wednesday 4 November at the British Council, 'Hope and Glory' will be the featured film. The film is suitable for persons of 15 years and over. The movie will start at 7:00 pm.

Today, 29 October, the American Centre will be showing the

Would You Believe....

Ancient Romans and Greeks used to slaughter an animal before battle to check out its liver. If the organ was healthy and red, it was a favorable omen. If diseased, it was bad sign.

Bjorn Borg, the tennis star from what seems to be many, many years ago, just turned 36 years old in 1992.

On TV's "Star Trek," Warp Factor 2 was an amazing 24 times the speed of light. Warp 8 was 512 times that amount.

By the time the Spaniards arrived in the late 1400s and early 1600s, the Indians of the Andes were growing more than 3,000 kinds of potatoes. Those first explorers brought the tuber back to Europe.

As of mid-year, Mount McKinley had claimed the lives of 11 climbers in 1992.

★ CROSSWORD PUZZLE ★

ACROSS

1 Shoreline
6 Finds fault
11 Lingered
13 Short capes
15 Comered
16 "Arabian Nights" character
17 Nibble
18 Good luck pet
20 Guided
21 WWII command
22 Portal
23 Colleen
24 Uncommon
26 Short trip
27 Bills and
28 Expressing enthusiasm
30 Was sullen
31 Algerian
32 Sea 27A
33 Fortification
35 Party giver
36 Glossy bird

DOWN

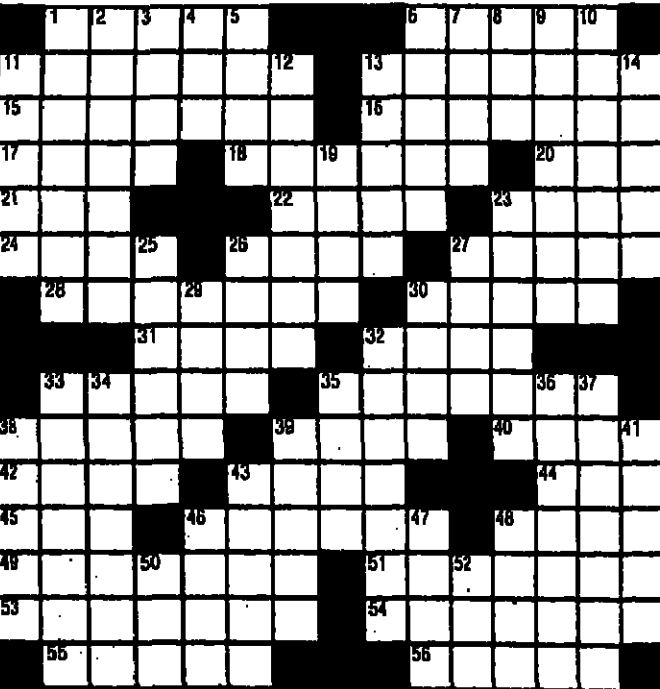
1 Paris or Albany
2 Speech-making
3 Comic
4 Johnson
5 Abound
6 Tinge
7 Came to earth
8 Johnny

38 Dog sound
39 Roman poet
40 Caviar base
41 Offer
42 Very white
43 Body of water
44 Former
45 Liqueur cocktail
46 Card holdings
47 — to Betsy
48 Go wrong
49 Cord

9 Nut candy
10 — up (got rid of a hangover)
11 Potato
12 Expressionless face
13 Sandwich meat
14 In a melancholy way
15 Planting earth
16 Burrowing rodent
17 Worn away
18 Glimpse over quickly
19 Maxium
20 Land of the ayatollah
21 Face disguise
22 — hen (English fowl)
23 Gorge
24 Plain
25 Greet

26 Enemy of the Crusaders
27 City in Washington
28 Automaton
29 Cotton bundles
30 Prophets
31 Strong-tasting, as some meat
32 Type size
33 Watch one's food
34 Son of Jacob
35 Paving material
36 Relative of the crow

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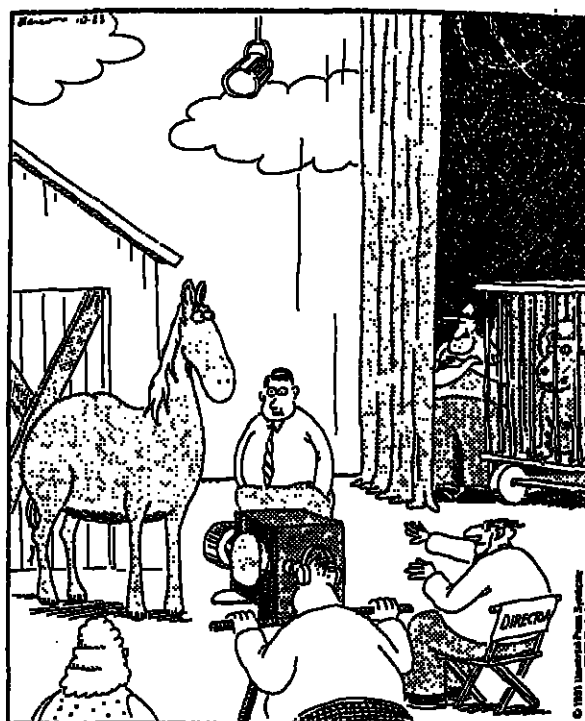
Solution

ACROSS
1 Shoreline
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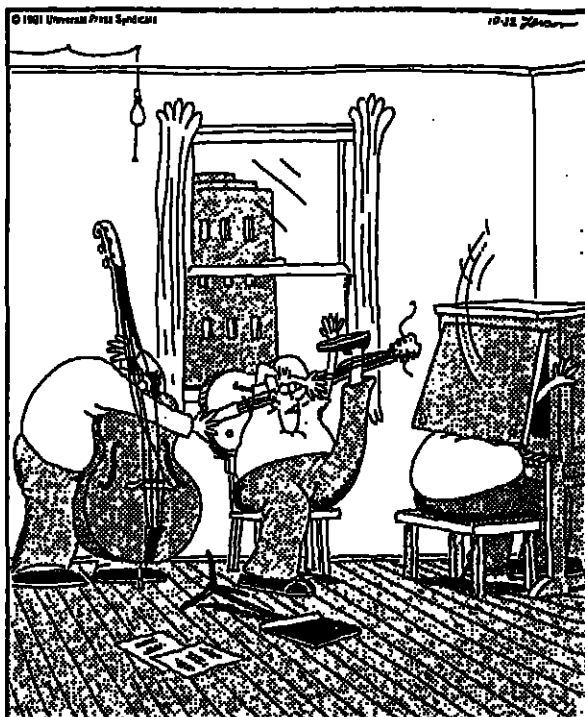
DOWN
1 Paris or Albany
2 Speech-making
3 Comic
4 Johnson
5 Abound
6 Tinge
7 Came to earth
8 Johnny

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



How Mr. Ed was made to talk



Regrettably, the Labinski brothers had selected an apartment in the heart of the Bermuda Triangle of jam sessions.



Dog previews

Diplomatic Corps

Algerian	641271/2
Australian	637246/7
Austrian Embassy	644635
Bahrain	664148
Belgian	675683
Bulgarian	818151
Canadian	666124
Chilean	661336
Cyprus Honorary Cons.	677559
Czechoslovakian	665105
Danish Consulate Gen.	622324
Finnish Consulate	623443
French	641273/4
German	689351
Greek	672331
Hungarian	816614
Indian	637262
Iraqi	639331
Italian	638185
Consulate Gen. Ireland	630878
Japanese	672486/7
Yugoslavian	665107
Kuwait	675135/8
Libyan	666118
Lebanese	641381
Moroccan	641451
Netherlands	637967/625165
Indonesian	828911
North Korean	666349
Norwegian Consulate	637164
Pakistan	622787
Palestine	677517
People's Rep. of China	666139
Philippines	645161
Polish	637153
Qatari	644312
Romanian	667738
Saudi Arabian	814154
South Korean	660745/6
Spanish	622140
Sudanese	644251/2
Swedish	669177/9
Swiss	686416/7
Syrian	641076
Tunisian	674307/8
Turkish	641251
United Arab Emirates	644369
United Kingdom	823100
United States of America	822471
USSR	641158
Yemen	642381
Delegation of the EEC	668191
UNDP	668171/7
UNRWA	669194/8
(Taiwan)	671530
UNICEF	629571
Con. of Sri Lanka	645312
Con. of Iceland	698851

Airlines

Alyonda (Air Yemen)	653691
Aeroflot	641510
Air France	666055 / 667824
Air India	688301/2
Air Lanka	682140
Alitalia	625203
American Airlines	669068
Arab Wings	894484
Adria Airways	667029
Austrian Airlines	637806/67028
Balkan Airlines	655909
British Airways	641430
China Airlines	637380
Cathay Pacific	624363
Cyprus Airways	667028
Egypt Air	630011
Emirates Airlines	662141/678321
Gulf Air	633606/656616
Hungarian Airlines	639295
Iberia	637827/644036
Iraqi Airways	628596/628598
Japan Air Lines	630879
K.L.M.	622175
Korean Airlines	676624/662236
Kuwait Airlines	690144
Libyan Arab Airlines	643831/2
Lufthansa	601744
Malaysian Airlines	639575/653446
M.E.A.	636104
Olympic	630125/638433
PIA	625981
Philippine Airlines	670155
Polish Airlines	625981
Qantas	641430/653447
Royal Jordanian	678321
Sabena Belgian Airlines	675888
Saudia	639333
Scandinavian Airlines	604649
Singapore Airlines	676177
Sudan Airlines	694501
Swire Air (G.S.A.)	659791/641906
MAJAL	690501
Syrian Air	622147
TAROM - Romanian	637280
Thai Airways	604649
Tyasa World Airline	623430
Turkish Airlines	659102
Yemenia Airways	828175
Yugoslav Airlines	604911

Queen Alia Airport (08)53200

Diary

Activities

Royal Cultural Centre	661026/7
American Centre Library	641520
British Council	636147/8
French Cultural Centre	637009
Goethe Institute	641993
Soviet Cultural Centre	644203
Spanish Cultural Centre	624049
Turkish Cultural Centre	639777
Haya Arts Centre	663195
Hussein Youth City	667181/5
Y.W.C.A.	641793
Y.W.M.A.	664251
Amman Mun. Library	637111
Univ. of Jordan Library	834555

Cinema

Concord	677420
Rainbow	625155
Plaza	674111
Philadelphia	634144
Nijom	675571

Sports Clubs

Al Hussein Sports City	667181
Orthodox Club	810491
Royal Automobile Club	815410
Royal Shooting Club	736572
Royal Chess Club	673713
Royal Racing Club	09-801233
Jordan Bridge Assoc.	676990

Rent-a-Car

Shakhshir	668958
Al-Jabal	666669
Kada	665161/665153
Al-Labadi	813554
National	639197/8
Nebo	816792
Petra	605501
Rabbit Amman	672424
Al-Rimal	639861
Al-Samer	665181
Satellite	625767/621471
Star	604904
Tiger	671931
Trust	673312
Al-Wahs	674105
Abu Degge	644642/644906
Amin Jarrar (Avis)	670498
Amman	666327
Arabia	641350
Avis-Jarrar	08/51000
Budget	604230
Deas	669970
Dirani	660601
Europcar	601350/80
General Services	674100
Gulf	660902

Hotels

Crown	758181
Philadelphia	663100
Marriott	660100
Regency	660000
Jerusalem	665094
InterContinental	665181
Ambassador	665181
Commodor	665181
Middle East	667150
Grand Palace	661121
Tyche	661114
International	841712
San Rock	813801
Alia Gateway	08-51000
Amra	815071
Plaza	674111
Aqaba	
Holiday Int'l	312426
Miramar	314340
Al-Cazar	314131
Coral Beach	313521
Aquamarine I	316250
Aqaba	314091
Aqaba Gulf Hotel	316636

Important Numbers

Amman Governorate	91228
Amman Civil Defence	198, 199
Civil Defence Irbit	271292
Civil Defence Dept.	661111
Ambulance	193, 775111
Amman fire brigade	198
First aid	630341
Blood Bank	775121
Civil Defence rescue	630341
Police rescue	621111, 637777
Police headquarters	639141
Traffic police	896390
Electric Power Co.	636381/4
Water complaints	897467
Queen Alia Airport	08) 53200
RJ Flight Info.	08) 53200

Hospitals

Hussein Medical Centre	813813
Khalidi Maternity	644281/6
Aksh Maternity	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mathas, J. Amman	636141
Palestine, Shmeisani	664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Muasher Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
Italian-Al-Muhajreen	777101/3
Al-Bashir, Ashrafieh	775111/26
Army, Marka	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/50
Amal Hospital	674155

General

Jordan Television	773111/19
Radio Jordan	774111/19
Ministry of Tourism	642311
Hotel complaints	605800
Price complaints	661176
Telephone Information	121
Jordan and Middle East calls	10
Repair service	623101

Museums

Folklore Museum: Jewelry and costumes over 100 years old. Also mosaics from Madaba and Jerash (4th to 18th centuries). The Roman Theatre, Amman. Opening hours: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. year round. Closed Tuesdays. Tel: 651760.

Jordan Archaeological Museum: Has an excellent collection of the antiquities of Jordan. Jabal Al-Qal'a (Citadel Hill). Opening hours: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Closed Tuesdays. Tel: 638795.

Jordan National Gallery: Contains a collection of paintings, ceramics, and sculptures by contemporary Islamic artists from most of the Muslim countries, and a collection of paintings by 19th century Orientalist artists. Muntazah, Jabal Weibdeh. Hours 10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Closed Tuesdays. Tel: 630128.

Churches

St. Joseph Church (Roman Catholic) Jabal Amman. Tel. 624590.

Church of the Annunciation (Roman Catholic) Jabal Weibdeh. Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church (Roman Catholic) Jabal Hussein. Tel. 661757.

Terrasanta Church (Roman Catholic), Jabal Weibdeh, mass in Italian every Saturday at 5:30 p.m. Tel. 623566.

Church of the Annunciation (Greek Orthodox) Abdali. Tel. 623541.

Church of the Redeemer: Jabal Amman. Tel. 625383.

Armenian Orthodox Church: Ashrafieh. Tel. 775261.

St. Ephrem Church (Syrian Orthodox) Ashrafieh. Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church: (Interdenominational) meets at Southern Baptist School in Shmeisani. Tel. 827981.

Church of the Good Shepherd: (Evangelical Lutheran) Um As-Summaq Tel. 811295.

JORDAN BRIDGE

By Ghassan Ghanem

Fit for life

HERE ARE two hand played by Rahnda Abou Seoud, who managed an amazing execution while I, as her partner, watched her declare both hands with a lot of admiration. She fulfilled both contracts speedily and perfectly.

"Cash your top winners before starting cross ruffing," Mrs. Alkashih (who was one of our opponents on that hand) commented, with little desperation and a lot of admiration.

♠ 9 6 5 4
♥ A J 3
♦ K J 9 7 5
♣ 10

N E
W S
♠ 3
♥ Q 9 8 5
♦ A 8 6
♣ A Q 6 4 2

South West North East
Pass Pass Pass 1♣
Pass 1♦ Pass 1♥
Pass 2♣(1) Pass 3♦(3)
Pass 3♦(2) Pass 4♦(3)
Pass 5♦ Pass End.

(1) Do you have a spade stopper?
(2) Do you have a semi spade stopper?
(3) No I don't have.

Rahnda was sitting West and bid 3♦ over her R.H.O. preempt. According to our agreement, the bid shows a good suit of diamonds or two suited hand with diamonds and a major. I jumped to 4♦, showing the ability to play the contract with the trumps tolerated, otherwise to bid naturally. When she bid 5♦ I realized that her hand included a strong diamond suit and I bid the slam.

She got a spade lead, which she ruffed, then cashed the two top heart honors before cross ruffing the hand to her last trump. Lesson number one:

Rahnda received a heart lead, played the eight from dummy and took South's ten with her jack. She ducked a spade and won the diamond return in dummy. After elimination through cross ruffing, Rahnda cashed the ♥ A and ducked her last heart to south, who had to give her the last heart in dummy. "Curious line," Michel Edt said. "She made her last trick by elimination and endplay instead of a simple finesse." Michel, (who happened to be south in this particular hand), persisted with his usual smile.